

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson**

### **“Empowering State and Local Officials Through Enhanced FEMA Regional Offices”**

June 4, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the joint field hearing with the Management, Investigations, and Oversight and Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and Response Subcommittees entitled “Empowering State and Local Officials Through Enhanced FEMA Regional Offices”:

“This morning you all saw some of the devastation Katrina left behind. It’s been 21 months, yet some of what you saw looks no different than it did on August 29, 2005. But some things have changed – and hopefully FEMA’s ability to respond to a disaster is one of them.

We’ve been told things are different now. We’ve been told that FEMA is ‘leaning forward’ and just waiting to move.

Thankfully, last year’s hurricane season was relatively calm and we never had to find out. We might not be so lucky this year – which is why it is so important that we’re holding this hearing today, just 3 days after the ‘official’ beginning of the hurricane season. I’m looking forward to hearing from the local officials about whether things are in fact different.

We need to know whether FEMA is working through its regional offices to develop the kinds of partnerships that will cut red tape, save time – and save lives – after the next big disaster.”

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